UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Thursday, 28 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. von WAGNER	(Germany)
later:	Mr. MORADI (Vice-Chairman)	(Islamic Republic of Iran)
later:	Mr. von WAGNER (Chairman)	(Germany)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE ON DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/48/SR.14
18 November 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-81903 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE ON DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS (continued)

1. Mr. CASSAR (Malta) said that the statements made in the course of the general debate indicated that many delegations were aware of the need for disarmament to be dealt with in the broader context of international peace and security. In the post-cold-war era the fear of a nuclear holocaust had been replaced by the likely spread of the growing number of regional and ethnic conflicts being waged throughout the world. The international community, now bonded by common values, must seek ways of dealing with such new challenges.

2. There had been a number of positive developments in the international political arena that were likely to enhance global security, including the recent agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which augured well for more durable peace in the Middle East. Likewise, the decision by the Government of South Africa to provide information on its past nuclear activities and to destroy its nuclear installations would improve the prospects for a nuclear-free Africa.

3. Malta was in favour of the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. It therefore urged Kazakhstan and Ukraine to follow the example of Belarus by acceding to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. Malta welcomed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements by the Conference on Disarmament to Assure Non-Nuclear-Weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, and hoped that its work would result in an international and binding treaty.

4. One of the major achievements of 1993 had undoubtedly been the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT). Malta believed that such a treaty must be universal and verifiable. With a view to ensuring the successful conclusion of a CTBT, it was to be hoped that the Ad Hoc Committee concerned could complete its work by the end of 1994 and that all nuclear-weapon States would refrain from further testing.

5. Malta considered that adherence to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) would lay the foundations for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. It therefore urged those countries which had not yet signed the Convention to do so without further delay with a view to strengthening international security and regional stability.

6. In view of its strategic position in the Mediterranean, Malta was firmly committed to enhancing security and cooperation between Europe and the countries of the Mediterranean region under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The adoption at the Helsinki summit meeting of

(Ms. Cassar, Malta)

Malta's proposal that CSCE should declare itself a regional arrangement in conformity with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter had been the first step towards more structured cooperation between the United Nations and CSCE countries. Further efforts were required to improve on that relationship and render it more effective in eliminating conflicts and building peace in the region. The current conflicts on the territories of the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union highlighted the need to promote greater transparency and accountability with regard to conventional arms transfers, and that should be one of the issues to be taken up in the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and CSCE.

7. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union, said that recent political developments testified to the international community's firm commitment to achieving international peace and security. For instance, the agreement between Israel and the PLO represented a watershed in the history of the region which he hoped would eventually lead to the restoration of rights of the Palestinian people, as well as the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab-occupied territories in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Promising developments were also under way in South Africa. It was the responsibility of the international community to enable other regions to make better use of their peace dividend by seeking appropriate solutions to the disarmament problem in the broader context of peace and international security and through concerted action to eliminate existing arsenals and the threat of the use of more sophisticated weapon systems.

8. Arms control and nuclear disarmament should be accorded priority since nuclear proliferation remained the greatest threat to global and regional security. In that connection, he was in favour of the extension of NPT provided that a more comprehensive, non-discriminatory and universally acceptable treaty could be agreed upon before the Conference scheduled for 1995.

9. The Chemical Weapons Convention was a remarkable achievement in itself and paved the way for real progress in other spheres of disarmament. Furthermore, in view of the importance of the ban on nuclear testing to the NPT and the nuclear non-proliferation regime, he welcomed the timely decision of the Disarmament Conference to start negotiations on a CTBT. Although the moratorium on nuclear testing observed by certain nuclear Powers was welcome, it was no substitute for a universal instrument to which all nuclear Powers should adhere.

10. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms would encourage greater transparency regarding arms transfers, but could not bring a halt to the manufacture and sales of weapons. The question of extending the scope of the Register, so as to ensure that it served its purpose better, should be taken up at the meeting of the Group of Experts scheduled for 1994. Another related issue requiring urgent attention was the unlawful sale of weapons to terrorist groups and other armed factions whose activities constituted a threat to national and even international security, for a concerted effort on the part of the international community was called for to put a stop to such illicit trafficking, and States should cooperate and exchange information to that end.

(Mr. Abdellah, Tunisia)

11. The industrialized nations which had undertaken disarmament initiatives should reassess their military priorities in favour of international development, for a modern concept of global security must encompass humanitarian, social and environmental aspects. In the current economic climate, the particular difficulties facing developing countries and their implications for security should be taken into account with a view to adopting a more comprehensive approach that would finally establish the link between peace, security and development.

12. The countries of the Arab Maghreb Union were doing their utmost to create conditions conducive to peace and security in their own region and strengthening links with groups both within and outside the region including the European Community. Moreover, talks among the countries of the western Mediterranean basin had been resumed with a view to establishing a zone of peace and cooperation in the region.

13. With the end of the era of ideological confrontation, the United Nations must meet the expectations of mankind for a safer and better world, but it could not do so without the necessary level of support for and confidence in its multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and security.

14. Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

15. Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) said that the opening for signature of the Chemical Weapons Convention in January 1993 was an historic event, for it was the first multilateral agreement calling for the total elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Its global nature should serve as a model for future agreements along the same lines.

16. The signature in January 1993 of the new Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) by the Russian Federation and the United States would reduce the number of strategic nuclear weapons still deployed by those countries by approximately two thirds, and would result, inter alia, in the elimination from their arsenals of multiple-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles, the most destabilizing component of the balance of terror.

17. It was encouraging to note that following the first year of operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, all the major suppliers and purchasers of weapons were among the 88 Member States which had transmitted information in reports covering 90 per cent of world arms exports. The Register's scope should be extended to include other categories of arms, transfers of military high technology and the stockpiling and procurement of arms through national production. By allowing greater transparency in armaments, the Register would help decrease the likelihood that States' intentions would be misinterpreted and would encourage confidence among States.

18. The success of the Register made it clear that disarmament and international security issues did not necessarily have to be solved through formal treaties. In that connection, the Disarmament Commission was making a very valuable contribution to the concerted efforts of the international

(Mr. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

community to reduce arms to the lowest possible level. Although its recommendations were not binding, they carried the moral authority of an international consensus. His delegation welcomed the adoption at the Commission's substantive session of 1993 of the guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament in the context of world security.

19. His delegation urged the Conference on Disarmament to take advantage of the momentum generated on certain disarmament issues to intensify substantive negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear tests, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and transparency in armaments. It welcomed the decision by the Conference to entrust its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban with the mandate to negotiate the complete prohibition of such tests, and believed that the prohibition should be universal in scope and should be fully verifiable. It was to be hoped that the decision by certain nuclear Powers to continue their moratorium on nuclear tests would create a favourable climate for the rapid conclusion of a new instrument calling for the complete prohibition of nuclear tests, ideally before the 1995 NPT review conference. In his delegation's view, the NPT should be extended.

20. The establishment by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of a mechanism for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa was an encouraging expression of the political will which would, he hoped, permit the early inclusion of the treaty on the denuclearization of Africa and the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

21. Mr. ZOWAWI (Saudi Arabia) emphasized the importance of consolidating the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in support of peace, security and stability. For example, the Gulf Cooperation Council provided the foundation for peace and security in the Middle East. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq had underscored how imperative it was for the States in the region to respect international norms and legality and the principles of international law. His Government urged the complete implementation by Iraq of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

22. Consideration of the issues of peace, security, disarmament and conflict-solving must be based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the rejection of occupation, hegemony and expansionism, the rejection of the use or threat of the use of force as a means of solving disputes, respect for the political systems of States and the right of each State to sovereignty, independence and economic and social development.

23. His delegation supported regional and international efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the situation in Somalia, and called upon all the parties involved to preserve the national unity of that country in the interests of peace, security and stability.

(Mr. Zowawi, Saudi Arabia)

24. His country had signed the NPT, had complied with its provisions and worked tirelessly to urge the international community to destroy chemical and biological weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It supported initiatives to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and called upon all States, in particular Israel, to join in international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

25. Countries that sensed a threat to their sovereignty and independence were entitled to take steps to guarantee peace and stability for their peoples in accordance with the United Nations Charter. However, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina were the victims of flagrant aggression that threatened their very existence as a people and as a country, a State Member of the United Nations. The situation there was one of the most dangerous ones now confronting the international community.

26. His delegation was hopeful that the current peace negotiations between the Arab States and Israel would lead to a permanent, complete, fair and peaceful solution of the Palestinian issue. If peace was to prevail in the region, Israel must fully adhere to the relevant resolutions and withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, in particular, Jerusalem.

27. Mr. ABU ODEH (Jordan) said that the conclusion of START II and the opening of the Chemical Weapons Convention for signature were landmarks on the road towards general and complete disarmament. Similarly, the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on a CTBT was a remarkable achievement in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. Such a treaty would contribute substantially to the prevention of both vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation, and would facilitate a consensus on the indefinite extension of NPT. A CTBT, together with full security assurances to be given by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States, should help rectify the situation resulting from the discriminatory nature of the NPT.

28. His delegation also looked forward to the complete prohibition of the production of fissionable material that could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons, as that would help pave the way for general and complete nuclear disarmament. His Government also commended international efforts to convert weapons industries for peaceful purposes, a step that would reduce the supply of arms in the international market and make resources available for economic and social development, thereby helping to promote international peace and security.

29. Adequate resources should be made available to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to enable it to discharge its functions - among which verification was of the utmost importance - efficiently and effectively. Efforts under way to create a verification mechanism for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) were commendable and deserved greater attention. He pledged his delegation's full support for those efforts. Recipients and suppliers of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons should bear equal responsibility for their proliferation. Multilateral proliferation control measures should be

(Mr. Abu Odeh, Jordan)

enhanced and should be carefully designed and implemented so as to avoid a negative impact on innocent importers of non-weapon-related material or equipment.

30. It was imperative to sustain the momentum towards peace in the Middle East which had been generated by the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the PLO and Israel and the Jordanian-Israeli Agenda. Israel should accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. That would eliminate a major source of concern among Arab States. His delegation also called upon Israel to implement strict safety measures in cooperation with IAEA in order to avoid the possibility of a Chernobyl-type nuclear accident, which would be devastating to his own and other neighbouring countries.

31. Citing paragraph 181 of document A/45/435, he noted with regret that Israel still had not taken any tangible steps to pave the way for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Conventional weapons, too, continued to be amassed in the region. Effective confidence-building measures therefore were of paramount importance, and transparency should be supplemented with other regional political and military confidence-building measures. His country had participated in good faith in the multilateral working group on arms control in the Middle East and hoped that the recent positive developments in the region would enhance confidence-building and in turn lead to a region free of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

32. Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that although the end of the bipolar world had created a favourable opportunity for the beginning of a new era of genuine peace, new conflicts of a different nature were now emerging which challenged the international community to identify new ways and means of tackling its problems.

33. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continued to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. His delegation therefore welcomed the accession of Belarus to the NPT and hoped that other countries would accede to it. The adherence of all declared nuclear States to the NPT would constitute an important step towards bringing about nuclear disarmament, as would the fulfilment by all States parties to the NPT of the commitments assumed under it. His Government also welcomed the conclusion of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, which it had signed, and looked forward to its early implementation. It had been glad to note the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiation of a CTBT and considered that the success of the negotiations would facilitate the preparatory work for the NPT Review Conference. It had also welcomed the constructive outcome of the special meeting of the Amendment Conference of the Partial Test-Ban Treaty (PTBT) and suported the continuation of the consultation process with a view to the resumption of the work of the Conference in 1994. In its view, the Conference on Disarmament remained the single multilateral negotiating forum, and it believed that an appropriate solution to the question of its enlargement would be found at an early date.

(Mr. Kittikhoun, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

34. The changing international situation had created a new environment of cooperation among the States of South-East Asia. His delegation welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum and was ready to participate actively in it. It supported as a matter of principle all initiatives aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones everywhere, including in its own region. If nuclear non-proliferation was accepted as in the long term interest of all, there would be room for progress in the consultations on the establishment of such a zone in South-East Asia.

35. Mr. BANG (Viet Nam) said that in the new situation created by the end of the cold war, a lasting solution to security problems should be sought through the building of an equitable international order in which all nations, large and small, were treated on an equal footing. His delegation welcomed the achievements of the Organization in the settlement of conflicts, and felt that in reviewing its peace-keeping operations, the established principles that had guided the work of the United Nations in that field should be maintained.

36. His delegation welcomed the completion of the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiation of a CTBT, as well as the continuing negotiations to amend the PTBT in order to achieve comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests. It believed that the process should be supported by the continuation of the moratorium on tests undertaken by the nuclear Powers. It also welcomed the conclusion of START II in 1993.

37. The 1995 NPT Review Conference would provide an opportunity to review and extend the Treaty and to redress the discriminatory provisions it contained. His delegation had therefore joined the call of the Non-Aligned Movement for the fulfilment of the commitments entered into under article VI of the Treaty. The issue of non-proliferation must be dealt with in both its horizontal and vertical aspects and that the security of non-nuclear States must be guaranteed. Although non-proliferation was of crucial importance, the ultimate goal was complete nuclear disarmament.

38. Confidence-building was indispensable in the pursuit of peace, security and development; in that context, his delegation welcomed the progress made in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and Africa.

39. In its foreign policy, Viet Nam had given high priority to the expansion of cooperative relations with the countries of the region: it had acceded to the Bali Treaty on Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia, had become an observer of ASEAN, and stood ready to participate in the bilateral and multilateral talks between the countries of the region aimed at promoting peace, stability and security. Its policy was to settle disputes including those on maritime zones and islands in the Eastern or South China Sea, through peaceful negotiations. In that spirit, Viet Nam had supported the principles of the ASEAN Declaration of 1992 concerning the settlement of disputes and the maintenance of security in the Eastern Sea, and it supported the building of a zone of peace, cooperation and development in South-East Asia, free from nuclear weapons and foreign military bases.

(Mr. Bang, Viet Nam)

40. In the modern world, the questions of peace, security and disarmament were becoming increasingly comprehensive in nature and more closely connected with other questions such as development. They must therefore be addressed together. His delegation believed that if the spirit of mutual understanding and constructive cooperation was maintained, further progress would be achieved towards the common goal of creating a safer, more equitable and more prosperous world. Viet Nam would cooperate fully in that task.

41. Mr. Wagner (Germany) resumed the Chair.

42. Mr. DANGUE REWAKA (Gabon) said that the current session was being held at an exceptionally favourable time for the establishment of lasting international peace and security. The international community must take advantage of that unique opportunity to reach consensus on matters affecting the common future of mankind, in particular disarmament, and, in the light of "An Agenda for Peace", to take specific action to preserve future generations from the horrors of war and poverty. Gabon would support any international arrangement that would accelerate the reduction of weapons of all kinds. It had signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, which should serve as a model for the negotiation of a CTBT.

43. In acceding to the NPT and embarking on the dismantling of its nuclear weapons programme, South Africa had given new impetus to the efforts of the African States to conclude, as soon as possible, a treaty making Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It was to be hoped that all the nuclear Powers would respect the moratorium on nuclear tests so as to facilitate the negotiation of a CTBT. The entry into force of such a treaty would offer real possibilities of strengthening the NPT, which Gabon felt should be extended for an indefinite period so as to ensure stricter limitation of weapons.

44. Gabon supported all the transparency measures introduced by the United Nations to achieve better control of the transfer of conventional weapons, and saw the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an important development. The steps taken by certain States to establish an effective system to control exports of conventional weapons offered a significant means of stopping the illicit trade in such weapons and their proliferation. The international community must go further and draw up binding regulations for the transfer and production of conventional weapons, which were a constant threat to security at the regional and subregional levels.

45. The Central African countries that were members of the Economic Community of Central African States had undertaken to work for peace, security and prosperity in the subregion, under the auspices of the United Nations. Those efforts had been endorsed by the General Assembly, in resolution 46/37 B, and had been followed by the establishment of a standing advisory committee on security questions in Central Africa. That committee had successfully conducted a programme of activities which, in September 1993, had enabled member States to adopt at Libreville a non-aggression pact whereby all the signatory States undertook to refrain from resorting to the threat or use of force in their relations, to resolve their disputes peacefully and to avoid destabilizing other signatory States.

(Mr. Dangue Rewaka, Gabon)

46. In line with the principle of universality a growing number of States, including Gabon, aspired to play a more active part in the various bodies of the United Nations system, including the Conference on Disarmament. His delegation believed that science and technology should be used to help establish peace in the world.

47. Mr. MALESKI (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that in a new political landscape, as it faced new challenges and the price that had to be paid for the resolution of new conflicts, the international community needed to work to create a globally integrated civilization. The nation State, as the basis of the current world system, was the framework within which problems should be resolved, so as to contribute to the stability of the world as a whole. However, the level of integration and interdependence in the world was such that the problems of other peoples could not be ignored without paying a serious material or moral price.

48. The breakdown of the totalitarian systems in Eastern Europe had led to the collapse of political, economic and military structures, creating a huge vacuum, and there was no guarantee that it would be filled with democratic content from which viable inter-State cooperation would evolve; different forms of autocracy were likely to find more favour with peoples who had not experienced democracy. The rise of nationalistic and other demagogues was yet another demonstration that democracy was a goal that was not easily reached.

49. Recent experience strongly suggested that it was up to the peoples of the region to build their own democratic, political, economic and cultural values and systems. However, the world community must show a tougher response to acts of aggression that left the weak at the mercy of the strong and a quicker response to the needs of those who supported the democratic processes and were engaged in economic reform and democratic institution-building. As the region entered a period of instability in the process of building democratic societies, cooperation and assistance were needed from the developed parts of the European continent and from the United States of America. With its policy of peaceful self-determination the Republic of Macedonia had successfully avoided war and rejected the dark sides of nationalism, and was building democratic values and institutions in extremely difficult conditions. At the same time, it was contributing to the stability of the Balkans. The international community should continue to provide assistance in stabilizing the region and supporting democratic and peaceful regimes. The preventive diplomacy inaugurated by the Secretary-General had demonstrated its possibilities in preserving peace. However, there was a need to move faster; his delegation therefore called on the United Nations and the European Community to continue to provide assistance and to remove obstacles from outside the borders which endangered survival.

50. The Balkans region was full of potential conflicts; historical barriers between nations and States stood in the way of a future of relations based on mutual trust and cooperation, a future of an integrated Balkans moving towards European integration. The peoples of the Balkans needed to find the strength and courage to turn to the future, leaving history behind them, so as to create a peaceful region without irrational barriers, where different nations coexisted

(Mr. Maleski, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

side by side. Otherwise, history would repeat itself, as was happening in parts of the former Yugoslavia.

51. The question of security in the Balkans was primarily a question of democracy, pluralism and integration, inside States and among them. The alternative was the most brutal variant of power politics - where the strong repressed the weak, drove them from their homes and land, or simply killed them. Ethnic war was far more cruel and senseless than any other military conflict humanity had experienced. Since State borders in the Balkans cut across ethnic lines, the process of transition towards democracy had opened numerous issues concerning rights of minorities that needed to be addressed; the question was whether they would be addressed through war, or through democratic institutions, which first had to be built, demanding patience and effort from peoples and political leaders.

52. If the Balkans slid into war that would divide the integrated part of Europe and the military alliance of the West, leading to the Balkanization of Europe and the reemergence of nineteenth century power politics. The Balkan States needed to demonstrate a high degree of restraint in the face of potential conflicts and must help those in need. The Republic of Macedonia had at one time provided refuge to over 40,000 refugees from Bosnia, despite its own difficult economic situation.

53. The energies of the peoples of the region must be turned away from war towards productive human aims - building economic, educational, political and democratic systems, in order to ensure prosperity for each individual. At the same time, the Balkan States should strive for integration through cooperation, because the small area of the Balkans could prosper only if there was understanding between the Balkan States. The politically stable and economically advanced parts of Europe and the world should consider the possibility of some kind of Marshall Plan to help the peoples and countries of the Balkans, and enable them to enter a new era of cooperation.

54. Mr. AL-BATTASHI (Oman) said that the end of the cold war had enhanced the prospects for peaceful coexistence and the repudiation of interference in the internal affairs of others and the use or threat of the use of force. The accumulation of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons presented enormous challenges to disarmament. In the Middle East, some countries had devoted vast sums to the acquisition of advanced weapons, which threatened peace and security. He therefore urged those concerned to exercise self-restraint and renounce their past policies aimed at confrontation. He hoped a comprehensive and binding legal instrument could soon be drafted which would meet the needs of all the countries of the region with respect to nuclear disarmament.

55. Oman welcomed the efforts of individual countries to halt nuclear testing and urged all countries to do so in the hope that nuclear weapons might be banned outright. In that context, he welcomed the agreement reached by the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The concept of collective security was vital, especially for the small countries that had no effective national defence systems. On 2 February 1993,

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

Oman had joined the more than 150 signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention; although the effect of that Convention might not be felt immediately, it represented a huge step in the right direction.

56. The results of the recent work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean had been disappointing. As a littoral State of the Indian Ocean, Oman urged members to show greater flexibility in order to push the preparations for the Conference forward.

57. His delegation welcomed the proposals of the Secretary-General on preventive diplomacy, which was an arduous task and would require considerable political, military and technical sacrifices. Such work could not be undertaken by the United Nations alone, but needed the full support of all the Member States.

58. He stressed the need to provide effective guarantees to countries without weapons in the event of aggression against them. There was broad support for the establishment of regional weapon-free zones, for which the main responsibility would rest with the countries concerned, which should renounce the stockpiling of weapons and military skirmishing with their neighbours. Such comprehensive and binding regional agreements should be entered into freely and without preconditions by any party.

59. Finally, disarmament and peace and security were complementary and organically linked. All States, and in particular the super-Powers, must preserve the dawning climate of security by turning away from military conflicts and redirecting their resources to economic development, the upholding of international instruments and more effective support for the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.